

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## Secretary Clinton Condemns Unwarranted Attack on U.S. Ambassador in Syria

By Merle David Kellerhals, Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton condemned as unwarranted an attack on U.S. Ambassador to Syria Robert Ford and his aides in Damascus, Syria, on September 29 as they were conducting normal embassy business.

“This attempt to intimidate our diplomats through violence is wholly unjustified,” Clinton said during an afternoon press briefing on September 29 in Washington.

Ford and several of his embassy aides were attacked in their vehicles while traveling to meet with a prominent Syrian reform movement figure and also were held up in an office for about an hour and a half by a pro-government mob, State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner said.

The ambassador and his embassy staff were not harmed during the attack, and they returned to the embassy safely. Syrian security officers did arrive and helped secure a path for the ambassador and aides to leave the office, he added, and provided an escort on the return to the embassy.

Nations that signed the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations — Syria is a signatory — are expected to carry out and respect their obligations to protect and not impede the work of foreign diplomats in their countries. The embassy vehicles were damaged in the attack, and the embassy personnel were assaulted.

“We condemn this unwarranted attack in the strongest possible terms,” Clinton said. “We immediately raised this incident with the Syrian government, and we are demanding that they take every possible step to protect our diplomats according to their obligations under international law.”

It is the second attack on U.S. diplomats in Syria since a reform movement started in mid-March. In July pro-government protesters attacked the U.S. embassy in Damascus after Ford conducted a visit to the city of Hama.

“Ambassador Ford has shown admirable courage putting himself on the line to bear witness to the situation on the ground in Syria,” Clinton said. “He is a vital advocate for the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people now under siege by the [Bashar] al-Assad regime.”

At a White House press briefing September 29, presidential spokesman James Carney told reporters that

the assault on Ford and his aides is “unwarranted and unjustifiable. This is clearly part of an ongoing campaign to intimidate and threaten diplomats attempting to bear witness to the brutality of the Assad regime.”

“Day after day, Ambassador Ford puts himself at great personal risk to support the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people,” Carney noted.

## Secretary Clinton on Iran’s Human Rights Violations

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesperson  
September 30, 2011

### STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

#### Iran's Continuing Human Rights Violations

The United States is deeply concerned by reports of the Iranian government’s continued repression of its people. Despite statements from Iran’s Supreme Leader and President claiming support for the rights and freedoms of Iranian citizens and people in the region, the government continues its crackdown on all forms of dissent, belief, and assembly.

We are particularly concerned by reports that Christian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani is facing execution on charges of apostasy for refusing to recant his faith. This comes amid a harsh onslaught against followers of diverse faiths, including Zoroastrians, Sufis, and Baha’is.

Iran’s government continues to arrest journalists and filmmakers. They are restricting access to information by jamming incoming satellite broadcasts and filtering the Internet.

The United States stands with the international community and all Iranians against the Iranian government’s hypocritical statements and actions, and we continue to call for a government that respects the human rights and freedom of all those living in Iran.

## New Agreement Would Boost Intellectual Property Protection

Washington — Intellectual property rights would be strengthened under a “first-of-its-kind” alliance of trading partners, the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), signed by eight nations in Tokyo on October 1.

All 11 ACTA negotiating parties attended the signing ceremony. Representatives of Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore and the United States signed the agreement; representatives of the European Union, Mexico and Switzerland attended and

confirmed their continuing support for the pact as they complete their domestic procedures to enable them to sign, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) said.

“The ACTA provides a platform for the Obama administration to work cooperatively with other governments to advance the fight against counterfeiting and piracy,” U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk said in a statement.

Among its provisions, ACTA would:

- Require that border enforcement authorities be empowered to act on their own initiative against both imports and exports of counterfeit and pirated goods.
- Require that criminal enforcement authorities be able to act on their own initiative in piracy and counterfeit cases, rather than wait for a complaint.
- Further clarify existing international requirements for the availability of criminal penalties when piracy or counterfeiting is carried out for commercial advantage.
- Require criminal remedies against import or use of labels or packaging for counterfeit goods so that counterfeiters could not escape punishment by shipping labels or packaging separately from the products for which they are intended.

ACTA also will be the first agreement of its kind, according to a USTR fact sheet, “to include a binding commitment to address the scourge of piracy over digital networks, and to do so in a manner that respects fundamental values, such as freedom of expression, fair process, and privacy.”

“When it enters into force with all participants, the ACTA will formalize the legal foundation for a first-of-its-kind alliance of trading partners, representing more than half of world trade,” the negotiating parties said in a press statement.

ACTA opened for signature on May 1, 2011. Japan is the depositary of the agreement. Parties that have not yet signed may submit their signatures to Japan. For those who have already signed, the next step is the deposit of instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval. The agreement enters into force following the deposit of the sixth such instrument.

### **Global Partnership Brings Vaccines to More Children, More Nations**

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer

Washington — More children in the developing world will soon receive protection from the world’s most widespread life-threatening diseases, an alliance devoted to increasing immunization around the world announced

September 27.

The GAVI Alliance (formerly the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) said the new vaccination campaign will provide funding to pay for vaccines in dozens more countries where they are not currently available. The vaccines will protect the children receiving them from two of the diseases with the highest fatality numbers in the developing world.

“These new vaccines will prevent millions of children from dying of pneumonia and diarrhea, the biggest killers of children under 5,” said Anthony Lake, executive director of UNICEF, one of the many partners in the GAVI Alliance.

Sixteen more countries will receive support for rotavirus vaccines, which have proven to be highly effective at reducing severe and fatal diarrhea. Eighteen more countries will be able to introduce pneumococcal vaccines, according to the GAVI Alliance press release. Pneumococcal disease causes pneumonia, meningitis and sepsis, which kill half a million children each year.

IN 2000, GAVI began its campaign to save children’s lives and protect people’s health by increasing access to immunization in the world’s poorest countries. Even though broad vaccination campaigns have proven themselves to be unquestionably successful at lowering death rates among children, 1.7 million children still die from a vaccine-preventable disease because they lack access to vaccines.

GAVI has attracted support and funding from the world’s most prominent health organizations, including the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It also counts many governments — including the United States — as members of the alliance.

“Thanks to our donors and partners,” said GAVI chief executive officer, Dr. Seth Berkley, “the GAVI Alliance is now delivering on its promise to protect more children across the developing world against rotavirus, pneumococcal disease and other life-threatening yet preventable diseases.”

By 2015, GAVI and its partners plan to support more than 40 of the world’s poorest countries in providing rotavirus vaccines and immunizing more than 50 million children.

“The high number of approved applications for funding for new vaccines in this latest round is yet another milestone in the fight to prevent child deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases,” said Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO director-general. “As demand for new vaccines increases further, WHO will continue providing critical

support to countries for decisionmaking on new vaccines, surveillance, and immunization program planning, training, and evaluation.”

On the fringes of the U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York September 21, Rajiv Shah, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and Andrew Mitchell, U.K. secretary of state for international development, highlighted GAVI as a model global development partnership that is significantly helping advance the Millennium Development Goals.

“To meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, we must work more effectively and efficiently to deliver meaningful results for the people we serve and GAVI is a good example of success,” said Shah. “GAVI and immunization represent outstanding value for our money. Investments in immunization yield a rate of return that is higher than nearly any other development intervention,” he added.

Since the alliance began its work, 288 million children in the world's poorest countries received immunization when they would not have otherwise. This ongoing effort has averted more than 5 million premature deaths, GAVI estimates, but also given millions of children the chance to grow up with better chances of maintaining good health.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov>)